

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 03828 172043Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 CA-01 L-03 H-02 HA-05 SY-05
MCT-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PPTE-00 ICA-20
OPR-02 AID-05 PC-05 /081 W
-----002691 181918Z /46

R 171950Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7492
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
USSOUTHCOM

UNCLAS MANAGUA 3828

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, NU (CHERNER, TERRY: KRAFT, DANIEL L.; BURKE, LLOYD)
SUBJECT: ASSAULT TO U.S. CITIZENS IN TRANSIT THROUGH NICARAGUA

1. ON SATURDAY AUG. 12/78 THREE YOUNG AMERICANS DRIVING
THROUGH NICARAGUA IN A VW BUS WITH MICHIGAN LICENSE PLATES
WERE APPROACHED APPROXIMATELY AN HOUR AND A HALF AFTER CROSSING
THE BORDER FROM HONDURAS BY A CAR WITH FIVE OCCUPANTS WHO
IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS NICARAGUAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AND
SHOWED THEM WHAT APPEARED TO BE OFFICIAL LOOKING BADGES.
UPON STOPPING THEY WERE INFORMED THEY WOULD HAVE TO ACCOMPANY
THE PRESUMED OFFICIALS TO THEIR HEADQUARTERS ON CUSTOMS CHARGES.

2. ENROUTE THEY WERE LED OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY (PAN AMERICAN
HIGHWAY) AND WERE TAKEN TO A DESOLATE ROAD AND ROBBED AT
GUNPOINT OF APPROXIMATELY \$50 CASH, THEIR CAMERA EQUIPMENT,
SPARE CAR PARTS, TOOLS AND ASSORTED BELONGINGS. IN ORDER
TO APPEASE THE ROBBERS WHO REPORTEDLY THREATENED THEM FOR
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ADDITIONAL CASH, ONE OF THE AMERICANS, TERRY CHERNER,
OFFERED TO GO WITH THEM TO CASH HIS TRAVELERS CHECKS.
HIS TWO COMPANIONS WERE LEFT TIED UP IN THEIR CAR BUT LATER
ESCAPED AND CONTACTED THE POLICE FOR ASSISTANCE. TERRY WAS
FINALLY RELEASED THAT EVENING AFTER A FUTILE SEARCH FOR A
PLACE TO CASH THE CHECKS. THEY RETAINED, HOWEVER,
APPROXIMATELY \$220 OF HIS TRAVELERS CHECKS ALREADY COUNTER-

SIGNED. THE ROBBERS NOR THE CHECKS HAVE YET BEEN FOUND. THE POLICE BELIEVE THEIR CUSTOMS BADGES ARE FALSE AND THAT THEY MIGHT POSSIBLY BE MEMBERS OF A GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION. THE EMBASSY AFTER LEARNING OF THE INCIDENT ASSISTED THEM IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH THE POLICE AND OFFICIALS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK AS THEY ATTEMPTED TO RECUPERATE THE LOST TRAVELERS CHECKS. TERRY CHERNER WAS UNABLE TO RECEIVE IMMEDIATE REIMBURSEMENT FROM CITY BANK AND WAS INFORMED TO CONTACT THEIR BRANCH IN EITHER SAN JOSE OR PANAMA.

3. THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN ADVISED BY SEPARATE REFTEL (MANAGUA 3801) OF THE POST'S RECOMMENDATION TO REISSUE A TRAVEL ADVISORY WARNING LAND TRAVELERS NOT ONLY OF POSSIBLE RECURRENCE OF CIVIL STRIFE IN NICARAGUA BUT ALSO OF THE INCREASED CRIME RATE DIRECTED TOWARDS FOREIGN TRAVELERS IN TRANSIT THROUGH NICARAGUA AS THIS CONSTITUTES THE THIRD INCIDENT IN RECENT WEEKS OF AN ASSAULT AGAINST AMERICAN TRAVELERS.

4. NEIGHBORING POSTS ARE ALSO REQUESTED TO RPOVIDE ASSISTANCE IF REQUIRED TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED TRAVELERS AS THEY CONTINUE ON THEIR TRIP TO BOGOTA.

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